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Homeland Security and Homeland Defense: Protection from the Inside Out

by Courtney Wirwahn

The armed forces have been engaged in homeland defense since the birth of the nation, but since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, homeland security and homeland defense are receiving much more attention. "Homeland security" and "homeland defense" are often used interchangeably, but there is in fact a distinct, definitional difference between the two, especially concerning the Army's active role in both. That being said, there is significant cooperation between those who work in each field to create a seamless network to protect the nation.

Homeland Security

Homeland Security is a national effort to prevent aggression and terrorist attacks against the United States from within its own borders, reduce vulnerability to those attacks, minimize damage and assist in recovery should an attack or domestic emergency occur. A national team effort that begins with local, state and federal organizations, homeland security is a broad civil mission involving all levels of government, from citizens and local first responders such as firefighters and police, to government leadership. Homeland security focuses on preventing attacks against the United States that come from within, and responding to and aiding in domestic emergencies, whether they be tornadoes or man-made events such as the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began operations in January 2003 after the signing of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. It brings together 22 federal agencies and 176,000 employees to form the third-largest government agency, with a \$30.4 billion budget.¹ As its name implies, DHS is responsible for the security of U.S. territory and those that reside within its borders. Its missions include preventing, reducing vulnerability to and providing resources to recover quickly from further terrorist attacks. The department is also responsible for border and infrastructure protection through a layered local, state, and federal approach. To accomplish these goals, DHS has combined the threat and intelligence analysis resources that were heretofore decentralized across the federal government.

Homeland Defense

Homeland Defense is military protection of the United States, its domestic population and critical infrastructure against aggression and threats emanating from outside its borders, as well as activities to deter potential aggressors and to prepare military forces should deterrence fail. Protection begins abroad, with forward-deployed forces stationed in foreign countries such as Afghanistan and on the Korean peninsula to prevent aggression before it reaches U.S. borders. Domestically, defense can constitute aircraft patrols of metropolitan airspace or protection of such critical infrastructure as power plants and factories.

The Department of Defense and U.S. Northern Command

The Department of Defense (DoD) organized a new Assistant Secretary of Defense position and a military command to accomplish the recast homeland defense mission. Confirmed by the Senate on 4 February 2003, Paul F. McHale became the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense. His office supervises all homeland defense activities at DoD and acts as liaison between DoD and DHS. By creating a new office within the department to deal exclusively with homeland defense, DoD hopes to streamline communication and response resources.

Another action taken as part of a strengthened homeland defense effort was the creation on 1 October 2002 of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) as part of the Unified Command Plan. USNORTHCOM was created to command and control DoD homeland defense initiatives and provide assistance to civil authorities in time of emergency. With a \$70 million budget for 2003, USNORTHCOM aims to be a “one-stop shop” for homeland defense, which, prior to 1 October 2002, had been handled by multiple military organizations.² Headed by Air Force General Ralph E. Eberhart and located at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, it is the only unified command center with North America as its area of responsibility. Its mission is two-fold:

- to conduct operations to deter, prevent and defeat threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories, and interests within the assigned area of responsibility; and
- to provide military assistance to civil authorities (MACA) including consequence management operations as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense.³

USNORTHCOM works with Joint Task Force Headquarters, Homeland Security (JFHQ-HLS), which operates under U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), another unified command. Headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, JFHQ-HLS coordinates the land and sea defenses of the United States and also organizes MACA missions. Under JFHQ-HLS, Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS), headquartered at Fort Monroe, Virginia, responds to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) attacks within the country’s borders, in support of a lead federal agency. Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6), based at Fort Bliss, Texas, supports local, state and federal counterdrug operations at the lead agencies’ request.

Northern Command does not have any standing forces—it must request them as needed from DoD. USJFCOM is USNORTHCOM’s military force provider. Under USJFCOM, Army forces come from Forces Command (FORSCOM). When reserve component forces are required, the Army looks to its 1st and 5th U.S. Armies to provide training, mobilization and deployment oversight of the reserve component according to FORSCOM requirements. Air forces come from the Air Combat Command, Marines from Marine Forces Atlantic, and naval power from Fleet Forces Command.

Military Assistance to Civilian Authorities

First responders may lack the resources to adequately respond to and manage an emergency, depending on the nature and scale of the event. In such situations, the military may be able to provide assistance. This allocation of military manpower and resources in times of emergency is known as Military Assistance to Civilian Authorities. Under MACA, the Army and other services may help civil authorities by providing extra personnel, specialized know-how or equipment. The Secretary of Defense is the executive agent for MACA, with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense acting as the staff proponent. However, the Posse Comitatus Act prohibits the military from enforcing civil law except by an act of Congress, which limits the ability of the Army to lead any disaster management efforts.⁴ With authorization from the President or the Secretary of Defense, the Army instead assists a lead federal agency that

controls the effort, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). There are only certain conditions under which USNORTHCOM could assist a lead civil agency:

- non-emergency temporary circumstances, i.e., special events, counterdrug operations, and disaster management training and planning;
- emergency circumstances under direction of a lead federal agency; or
- extraordinary circumstances, such as an attack on U.S. soil or a CBRNE event.



MACA is an example of established cooperation between DHS and USNORTHCOM elements to fulfill the mission of emergency response and management, but the two organizations agree that the primary burden for responding to emergencies and for defending and securing communities falls to local authorities.

Implications for the Army

Today's Army is at its highest operational tempo in years, with some 355,000 soldiers deployed in 120 countries.⁵ With 73 percent of active brigades deployed, the Army already finds itself overcommitted and underresourced. Additional homeland defense duties could exacerbate the problem. Senior DoD leadership is aware of the issue, although opinions differ over what to do about it. As he retired from active service in June 2003, Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki warned against "a 12-division strategy for a 10-division army."⁶ In August 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld said he wanted to explore options such as rebalancing the active and reserve components and transferring certain noncombat military jobs to civilians or contractors before making a decision on increasing Army end-strength to reduce stress on the force.⁷ Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker thinks the Army will have to look at endstrength at some point, but not before taking other action such as evaluating and reorganizing Army divisions to multiply their capabilities.⁸ The Department of Defense avers that it has enough forces to complete the missions at hand.⁹ However, in the event of another large-scale attack on the United States, active Army resources may not be able to adequately respond without calling up large numbers of its reserves.

Many of the approximately 28,500 soldiers involved in homeland defense and civil support as part of Operation Noble Eagle are reserve component.¹⁰ The National Guard and Reserve have made some of the most visible contributions to the global war on terrorism, from being the first air support to arrive in New York City on 11 September 2001 to providing security at airports in the months that followed. McHale envisions the National Guard as playing an "essential role in Homeland Security."¹¹

However, the National Guard may be overstretched by the stress of wearing two hats:

- serving the state (under Title 32 of the U.S. Code); and
- responding to increased call-ups for missions at home and abroad for homeland defense duties (under Title 10).¹²

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has expressed concern that some forces are losing valuable training time by assisting with homeland defense missions that differ from their normally assigned occupations in the reserve component.¹³ GAO worries that readiness could erode and retention would suffer as resources are stretched and the number and length of deployments increase. Another concern is repeated call-ups

of occupations most in demand, such as Civil Affairs and Military Police. The bulk of these positions are in the reserve component, which results in repeated call-ups for longer periods of time compared to other reserve component occupations. For these soldiers, repeated, long absences take a toll on family and civilian professional lives.

Despite these challenges, the reserve component leadership stands ready to continue its key role in homeland defense as it adapts to account for its new duties.¹⁴ Lieutenant General H Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, announced in May 2003 a plan to transform the Guard to increase its effectiveness in mobilizing, deploying and fulfilling its missions.¹⁵ The Guard will now work as a whole instead of as separate, state-based entities—108 state headquarters will be streamlined into 54 joint headquarters. Blum has also committed to having 55 civil support and chemical biological incident response force units. Simultaneously, Lieutenant General James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve, has set forth imperatives to transform the Reserve so that they can best carry out their homeland defense duties. Goals include renewed focus on training, readiness and mobilization. Helmly would like to rebalance unit structures to ease the burden on those overly deployed units. These changes will better train the reserve component to accomplish homeland defense and other missions.

Working Together: Challenges and Opportunities

From prevention to recovery, USNORTHCOM, DoD, DHS and local first responders all must work together to create a seamless network that protects the United States. What becomes problematic is that with so many contributors, clear roles and responsibilities are very difficult to pin down. USNORTHCOM, the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, and DHS are all newly created entities; their internal processes and paths of cooperation with other agencies have yet to be fully clarified. A better understanding of each party's role will lead to improved long-term coordination and frameworks to allocate responsibility for securing and defending the homeland as needed.

A forthcoming Defense Science Board report gives some specific recommendations for better coordination. Information sharing between first responders and the military must be encouraged so that those on the scene have the information required. The report recommends that USNORTHCOM implement a communications system demonstration to reduce redundancies and unify intelligence sources. Solidifying cooperation on protecting critical infrastructure, both public and private, would also be a positive step. The board supports the contributions from the Guard and Reserve in these areas; one recommendation is to stand up state command and control elements with direct links to USNORTHCOM and for states to work with Guard and Army leadership to implement tactical response plans for emergencies.

In an era where sustained operations have become the norm, the Army makes a vital contribution to homeland defense but may find itself further strained should it have to take on more large-scale missions. Concerns over recruiting and retention and the mix between active and reserve forces are on the rise as the deployments increase and citizen-soldiers are increasingly called up. But as DHS, USNORTHCOM and the office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense mature, an opportunity exists to transform current processes and responsibilities to facilitate effective and efficient Army involvement in and contributions to the homeland defense mission.

Endnotes

- ¹ <http://w3.access.gpo.gov/usbudget/fy2003/pdf/bud34.pdf>.
- ² John Sarche, "Military Preparing for Opening of Homeland Defense Command," The Associated Press, 30 September 2002.
- ³ http://www.mil/index.cfm?fuseaction=s.who_mission.
- ⁴ Title 18 of the U.S. Code (USC), Section 1385: "Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both." http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+18usc1385.
- ⁵ LTG Richard A. Cody, Remarks Before Readiness Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee, 21 October 2003, <http://armedservices.house.gov/openingstatementsandpressreleases/108thcongress/03-10-21cody.html>.
- ⁶ GEN Eric K. Shinseki, Retirement Ceremony remarks, 11 June 2003, quoted on "CNN Daybreak," 18 June 2003 (CNN Transcript #061805CN.V73).
- ⁷ Bradley Graham. "Rumsfeld Not Sold on a Bigger Military; Secretary Says He Is Open-Minded on Idea," *The Washington Post*, 6 August 2003, p. A2.
- ⁸ GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, Confirmation Hearing, Senate Armed Services Committee, 29 July 2003.
- ⁹ Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Remarks at Eisenhower National Security Conference, 25 September 2003, <http://www.dod.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030925-secdef0712.html>.
- ¹⁰ "The Army as of October 17," *Army Times*, 27 October 2003, p. 7.
- ¹¹ Statement by Mr. Paul McHale, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, Before the Sub-committee on Readiness, House Armed Services Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, March 13, 2003, <http://www.house.gov/hasc/openingstatementsandpressreleases/108thcongress/03-03-13mchale.html>.
- ¹² Jack Spencer and Larry M. Wortzel, *The Role of the National Guard in Homeland Security* (Washington D.C: The Heritage Foundation, 8 April 2002), p. 6. Title 10 addresses national service. Title 32 addresses state service; section 502[f] allows for national service under the command and control of the state governor.
- ¹³ *Homeland Defense: Preliminary Observations on How Overseas and Domestic Missions Impact DoD Forces*, GAO-03-677T (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, 29 April 2003).
- ¹⁴ Adjutant General Association of the United States/National Guard Association of the United States, *Joint Paper on Homeland Security*, February 2002, <http://www.ngaus.org/adjutants/agaushomelandsecuritypaper.asp>.
- ¹⁵ LTG H Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau, National Guard Bureau Chief Briefing on the Transforming Roles of the National Guard, 16 May 2003, <http://www.DoD.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030516-0188.html>. See also LTG H Steven Blum, "The Army National Guard—Back to the Future," Landpower Essay 03-3 (Arlington, Va.: Association of the United States Army, September 2003), www.ausa.org/ilw.